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Two Tough Lessons

Americans have learned many a lesson in the wake of the ill-fated invasion of Cuba last month by exiled Cubans. Two of those lessons are these: (1) Under certain circumstances, U. S. military policy will now allow this nation to strike the first blow; and (2) Both sides "play dirty" in the new world struggle of freedom and totalitarianism.

In the first instance, President Kennedy has made it clear that although "any unilateral American intervention in the absence of an external attack upon ourselves or an ally would have been contrary to our traditions and to our international obligations...our restraint is not inexhaustible."

Explaining this wide shift in U. S. policy, Kennedy said in a major policy address: "Should it ever appear that the inter-American doctrine of noninterference merely conceals or excuses a policy of non-action; if the nations of this hemisphere should fail to meet their commitments against outside Communist penetration, then I want it clearly understood that this government will not hesitate in meeting its primary obligations which are the security of our nation."

In this statement, the President has left himself definite "outs." He has not gone to the absolute brink. One of the loopholes is in the definition of what is meant by "Communist penetration." But the meaning is clear. The U. S. may one day strike the first military blow.

In the other instance it is now clear to those Americans who did not already know it, that both sides play the "sneaky game." Until the U2 spy plane revelations, few Americans realized that the Good Guys spy plenty, too. Follow up stories on the U2 incident revealed a bit of the workings of the Central Intelligence Agency, our super-spy organization.

But, now, the lesson is clear.

It is common knowledge that the CIA, which deploys spies throughout the world, secretly armed and trained the Cuban rebel force that was defeated at the Bay of Pigs; that under CIA auspices, the rebels were also provided with ships and fuel; that much of the logistics were arranged by the CIA.

These are two very abrupt lessons which Americans have learned. But in the meantime, the balance of the world has learned them, too.

And one of the difficulties in future struggles for the minds of men in uncommitted nations may well be that to the uncommitted, it is now just a wee bit more difficult to distinguish the Good Guys from the Bad Guys.

J. F.